Stranger Things Have Happened by brodiew

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Summary:

In which Dustin falls asleep, after the gate is closed, and meets Luke Skywalker at the first Jedi Temple. This is not the Luke Dustin knows which will lead to a youngling teaching a Jedi Master a thing or two. Two parts. Maybe more.

1. Chapter 1

Part 1

The night El closed the gate, the 'family' slept at Will's house. Exhausted and not just a little on edge, having everyone together soothed the tensions and eased them of to sleep.

Dustin drifted off leaning against Mike, who didn't seem to mind because his focus was 100 percent on El. And, why wouldn't it be…

When he woke up, he saw blue sky all around. He could feel the uneven ground pressing into his back. A cool breeze was dancing through his curls. Turning over on his side, he realized that he was laying on the ground near what looked like an ancient rock structure. Patches of green littered the rock surface, but from what he could see, there wasn't much surface to cover. He felt woozy, and, to avoid falling down, he pressed his hand the nearest wall. Observing it more closely, the rock structure seemed to be made by the stacking of pieces of what could only assume was shale.

As he made his way around the rock wall, the sky met the horizon and the horizon was a vast ocean. The dizziness hit again and he sat down. He had to be dreaming. He was on an island in the middle of the ocean. He appeared to be by himself, but if the stacking of rocks was any indication, he may have company soon. Thankfully, this was not the Upside Down. The sky was blue and there were no cotton flakes in the air. The sun was out and he could hear…

"May I help you? came the gravelly voice out of nowhere. If he weren't sitting, he would have jumped and then fainted dead away. As he was sitting, he fell over sideways unconscious. He soon came awake to someone patting his cheeks and talking to him in a calm voice.

"Wake up, young one," the voice repeated. "You are safe, even if I have no explanation for you."

Dustin opened his eyes and his vision was filled with the face of a bearded old man. He scrambled backward and knocked his head on

the wall behind him.

The old man winced, tugged on his beard, and said: "Are you going to keep doing that? The damage could become permanent."

"What the hell?" Dustin blurted. He was now inside. He checked to see if he still had his clothes on. Whew! He did. "Who are you?"

"We can get to that later," the man said, finally sitting on the opposite side of a fire pit on the middle of cave like room they were in. "I'm more concerned about who you are and where you came from."

The old man was wearing strange robes that made him look like a monk or something. But, the robes weren't dark brown like he had seen in movies. They were light brown, or grey, from what he could see in the low light. He wondered what Mike or Will would make of this? How would Lucas react to this situation? El would probably go all Luke Skywalker on him and ask questions later. "I'm Dustin. Where am I and who are you?"

The robed man frowned. Dustin could tell that his presence was disrupting something, but that was the least of his worries. If this was a dream, he'd have to play it out.

"Nice to meet you, Dustin," the man said, amiably. "I'm Tycho. Your clothing is strange and what is that on your head?"

"I was about to say your clothing is weird and ask you why you dragged me into this little cave?" Dustin retorted.

"I thought you might be more comfortable here than lying out in the open on a bed of rocks."

Dustin eyed the cave opening and thought of making a run for it, but the old guy hadn't said or done anything threatening so he decided to stay cool. "Yeah, I guess that's true."

"So, where did you come from, Dustin?" the older man asked, genuine interest in his voice.

The boy straightened his hat and decided to come out with it. "Hawkins, Indiana. What about you?"

"I don't know that place, " said the monk. "You're going to have to help me."

Dustin narrowed his eye and gave the old man a sideways look of incredulity. "I understand not having heard of Hawkins, but Indiana, dude! The United States!"

Dustin received a blank stare for his trouble "Son of a bitch! You've never heard of the USA? Dustin stood an started pacing back and forth in the small room. "Okay, the good news is you speak English. The bad news is you're an old hermit living in the middle of nowhere. At least Ben Kenobi lived on solid ground. Yoda in the in the murky swamp. An island in the middle of the ocean is is pretty ridiculous. How is your apprentice supposed to find you?

As he was pacing, he noticed the old man's eyes widen and and his jaw slowly drop. He regarded Dustin with even a more curious eye than before.

"What? Oh, forget I said all that," he said, with a bashful grin. "I can get going and not know when to stop."

"No," the old hermit said earnestly, gesturing for him to continue. "Yo-da and Ken-obi sound fascinating. Tell me more."

Dustin looked at his host and thought he saw a twinkle in the blue eyes hidden behind the grey beard and long hair. "They aren't really relevant, Mister. The bottom line is I need to get home to my friends and my mom. They'll start to worry."

"Dustin," the old man said, softly. "You told me you were dreaming. If this is a dream or a vision of some kind, no one is missing you, because you are right there with them as we are speaking."

Dustin shrugged nervously. "Oh, yeah. That. So, uh what do we do now?"

The old man stretched out his hand, which had been inside his voluminous sleeves, and pointed at him. He had a black mechanical hand.

"Holy Shit!" the boy exclaimed, searching the small room anything

that could be used as a weapon. "Are you some kind of android or terminator or that's going to kill me for sport and feed my body to sharks down down below! Are you going to make me food for your demodog!"

Dustin dashed for the door of the dwelling only to have his arm caught on the grip of the mechanical hand. "Calm down, Kid," the monk said. "Though I'm not sure what most of that meant, I'm not going to hurt you.

Letting go of the young one, he raised the mechanical hand and gave him a closer look. "See, just a prosthetic."

"Not like any prosthetic I've ever seen," Dustin replied, touching the hand which was proffered. "That's some crazy futuristic shit! Like Luke Skywalker! Vader cut off his hand and he got a new robotic one."

"I guess so," the older man replied, staring intently into the boy's eyes.

Dustin returned the man's ominous stare and noticed the twinkle again.

Dustin's eyes popped! His jaw hung open. His hand came lazily to his mouth to cover the gaping hole.

"Son. Of. A. Bitch," Dustin whispered in awe. "The guys are not going to believe this. They will shit their pants! Well, maybe not. But this is amazing. Is it really you?"

The old hermit was taken aback by the young one's response. He wasn't sure how to respond. He decided on self-effacing.

"Who?" he asked.

"Luke Freaking Skywalker!" the boy declared, ecstatically, still shaking his head in disbelief. "Jedi Knight! Or, Jedi Master by now. Right?"

The old man stroked his beard. His lips thinned and his eyes grew sad. He withdrew his hands back into his sleeves.

The old hermit nodded his head gravely. "I am Luke Skywalker, but I'm not the man you think I am."

Dustin 's countenance fell. There was only one Luke Skywalker.

"Who else could you be?" Dustin said with the quaver in his voice that signified a boy meeting a broken version of his hero.

To be continued...

2. Chapter 2

"I am no longer the defeater or Empires," Skywalker said, matter of fact. "Nor am I the ersatz father of a new generation of Jedi. I'm just old mad waiting to die."

The emotional quaver in Dustin's voice disappeared as his tone hardened. "Well that sure sucks!"

"Sucks?" the old hermit inquired. "What does that mean?"

"Sucks wind, Luke," Dustin added as he paced the stone hut. "Steals joy, sucks life, you know. Demoralizing, Dude!"

Luke wagged his eyes in indifference and sat down, again, by the fire. "Demoralizing or not, I am no longer a Jedi, much less a Master."

Dustin looked at Skywalker as if he had sprouted a second head, which may have been preferable to the drivel he was hearing.

"This is not going to work," Dustin muttered as he passed behind Luke continuing to pace. "What went wrong, Luke?"

"Not really your business, Kid," Luke replied, stoically. "I've been here long enough for it not to matter."

Dustin stopped in his tracks. "Oh, Man, this must be bad. How can you think you don't matter?

Luke stared, wordlessly, at the fire.

Dustin came and sat across from him, still surprised that the black clad Jedi Knight he knew was now this sad man in gray who had left the galaxy to fend for itself.

"We love you, Luke," Dustin said with genuine heart. "You are a hero to so many people. Do you know how deep that goes? We want to be like you. I want to be like you. You're strong. You are loyal. You are so utterly adaptable. You know what I mean? Brave, Dude! You are wi-getting wiser all the time."

Luke chuckled to himself, but still did not meet Dustin's eyes. "That wisdom finally caught up to me, Dustin. I wish it never had."

"I wish Mike were here," Dustin said, desperately. "Even Will or Lucas. They are wiser than me. They might be able to give you what you need to snap out of this."

Luke looked up. "I'm not going to snap out of this, Kid. The Jedi are dead. They are no more. I'm too old and too unwilling to start again."

"Again?" Dustin said, grabbing on to nugget of revelation. "So, you had students? You started a New Jedi Order?"

"Yes," Luke replied, his voice croaking with emotion.

"They died or you disbanded them?" Dustin asked.

"Didn't you hear me, kid? The Jedi are dead!" Luke replied, frustration lacing his works. "Shouldn't you be waking up about now?"

Dustin was unperturbed. He pinned Luke with a steely gaze. "You are right about one thing, Master Skywalker. You are one sad, sorry Son of a Bitch. And, if you don't know what that means, it means pathetic. The truly sad part is that you are a hero, regardless of what happened. Life sucks sometimes, but you gotta get up and keep going. You remember that Rancor you fought, the one you single handedly dispatched with little or no use of the Force? Remember that? Well, my friends and I had to face a creature like that. It was ugly and it had sharp teeth and it was strong. Stronger than us, that's for sure. If we didn't have our Mage, we would have been dead. Our Mage, or Wizard, if that makes more sense, used the Fucking Force to kill it and save our lives. She could be your apprentice, Luke. Her name is El, short for Eleven, the number of her experiment. Yes, she was born in captivity and raised as a tool for the government. Very much like the shit Palpatine did on the side. Though he would probably be doing it to nonhumans. The amazing thing about El is that despite the inhumanity she experienced for her entire life, she is sweet and honest and kind. Powerful and fierce. You could learn from her as much as she could learn from you."

"Are you done?" the Jedi Master asked, standing. "That is a fine story, young one. But did any of your friends die? Did you have to see their dismembered and eviscerated bodies in the aftermath? Was it your nephew who betrayed you and destroyed everything you had built?"

Dustin shook his head, sadly. "You really don't get it. My friend's sister lost her best friend. The monster killed her. She isn't coming back. One of the monsters also got my cat. We weren't without losses. Another one of my friends was captured by the monster. Only a miracle spared his life. In fact, Luke, our Mage killed the Demogorgon and disappeared into thin air. We thought she was dead. For all intents and purposes, she was dead for almost a year. Another miracle brought her back to us. So, don't think you have the corner on suffering."

Luke listened without interruption. He received what the boy was saying and released his frustration into the Force. "I'm sorry you had to go through that at such a young age. Even more sorry for your friend Eleven and the one who is with the Force."

"You forgot my cat," Dustin said.

Luke allowed a small smile. "And your cat. Tell me ore about Eleven. You said she used the Force."

"Yeah, she did a little more than lifting rocks. She flipped a truck into the air to keep it from hitting us. She levitated Mike in thin air after those bastards made him jump off a cliff. She even made a guy pee himself. That was funny right there. But, Dude, killing the Demogorgon, was incredible. It was like she exploded it from the inside. That was when she disappeared. Kind of like Obi-Wan on the Death Star.

Luke nodded sagely. "It sounds like she has a lot of potential. But, is there any outlet for that power outside of military applications?"

"Probably not publically, but privately, the practical applications are endless. Just the other day, she was moving the piles of fire wood from the forest to the cabin where she lives. Or maybe that was another dream. She only returned to us tonight. You would be proud of her guardian, though. The Chief is a good man."

"I'm sure he is," Luke said. "It sounds like she has good friends, too. That is very important."

Dustin kicked the dirt floor of the hut. "It just stinks that you are so miserable Luke. It shouldn't be this way. You should be with Han and Leia and Chewbacca."

"I know it looks that way to you, Dustin," Luke said, peacefully. "And part of me knows you are right. The other part still feels strongly that Luke Skywalker, Jedi Master, is no more. It was good talking to you. I'm thankful for the opportunity. I'll leave you with this: I am not The Last Jedi. There is…another."

Dustin could not help, but grin and let loose a laugh. "Other than Leia, right?"

"Yes, Dustin, other than Leia," Luke replied with a smirk.

Without preamble, Dustin crossed the distance between them and gave Luke a hug. "I'm sorry I called you pathetic. I didn't mean it. You're still Luke Skywalker to me."

Luke embraced the boy lightly. "Thank you, Dustin. That means a lot."

As Dustin blinked away tears, he came awake back at the Byer's house. A small wet spot was on Mike's shoulder where his face just been. He quickly wiped away any residual tears. Scanning the room, he saw Lucas staring at him with a dubious gaze. Dustin's excitement rose and his grin went ear to ear.

"Lucas, you are not going to believe this!"

Fin.

Notes for the Chapter:

> I really enjoyed writing this. So if you enjoyed it, please drop a kudo or comment let me know. I'm toying with a follow up where Luke ends up in the Byers living room after he 'dies' in TLJ. Should proceed?

Author's Note:

Thanks for reading! This fic was born out of my love for both fandoms and the question of how Dustin would react to the cranky, hermit Luke in TLJ.

If you have the notion, please leave a kuddo or comment to let me know I'm doing something right. :-)